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SOVIET-ALBANIAN RELATIONS

ANNCR:

THE SOVIET UNION HAS ISSUED A NEW CALL FOR THE RESUMPTION OF FRIENDLY LINKS WITH OPPONENT COMMUNIST ALBANIA. THE APPEAL WAS CONTAINED IN A MESSAGE SENT BY THE PRESIDIUM OF THE SUPREME SOVIET TO TIRANA, MARKING THE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ALBANIAN PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC. THE MESSAGE, PRINTED ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE SOVIET COMMUNIST PARTY PAPER PRAVDA, EXPRESSED THE "DEEP CONVICTION" OF SOVIET LEADERS THAT THE RESTORATION OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO PEOPLE "WOULD MEET THE INTERESTS OF PEACE AND SOCIALISM". DOLPH HAERING HAS THIS BACKGROUND REPORT ON RELATIONS BETWEEN MOSCOW AND TIRANA.

VOICE:

BORDERING YUGOSLAVIA AND GREECE, THE SMALL ADRIATIC COAST COUNTRY OF ALBANIA WAS ONCE ONE OF MOSCOW'S CLOSEST ALLIES, BUT IN THE MID-FIFTIES, RELATIONS BETWEEN MOSCOW AND TIRANA BEGAN TO DETERIORATE RAPIDLY.

ALBANIA'S RIGIDLY MARXIST LEADERS DISLIKED FORMER SOVIET LEADER NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV'S SOFTER BRAND OF COMMUNISM, HIS CONDEMNATION OF STALIN, AND HIS RECONCILIATION WITH YUGOSLAV PRESIDENT TITO, THEN CONSIDERED A "REVISIONIST." THE DISPUTE BETWEEN MOSCOW AND TIRANA REACHED A CLIMAX IN NINETEEN SIXTY, WHEN ALBANIA REFUSED TO SUPPORT MOSCOW'S ATTEMPT TO ARRANGE A CONDEMNATION OF CHINESE POLICIES BY ALL COMMUNIST PARTIES. ALBANIAN COMMUNIST PARTY LEADER ENVER HOXA PERSONALLY ATTACKED NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV AT A COMMUNIST WORLD CONFERENCE IN MOSCOW. THE SOVIET UNION, IN TURN, OPENLY DENOUNCED ALBANIA,

AT THE TWENTY-SECOND CONGRESS OF THE SOVIET COMMUNIST PARTY, AND SUSPENDED DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH TIRANA. FOLLOWING THE SOVIET-LED INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN NINETEEN SIXTY-EIGHT, ALBANIA WITHDREW FROM THE WARSAW PACT, THE EAST EUROPEAN MILITARY ALLIANCE.

SINCE THEN, ALBANIA HAS BECOME A CLOSE POLITICAL ALLY OF CHINA, WHICH IN TURN HAS WILLINGLY PROVIDED ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ALBANIA. BUT THE COUNTRY'S LEADERS HAVE FAILED TO FOLLOW PEKING'S LEAD IN CULTIVATING CONTACTS WITH THE UNITED STATES AND WESTERN EUROPE. ALBANIA WAS THE ONLY EUROPEAN COUNTRY NOT ATTENDING THE HELSINKI EUROPEAN SECURITY CONFERENCE, AND IT HAS NOT ACCEPTED AN INVITATION FROM ATHENS TO JOIN OTHER BALKAN NATIONS IN A CONFERENCE ON ECONOMIC COOPERATION. THERE HAVE BEEN MOVES BY OTHER NATIONS TO LEAD ALBANIA OUT OF ITS SELF-IMPOSED ISOLATION. THE SOVIET UNION, FOR EXAMPLE HAS BEEN MAKING A NUMBER OF ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH NORMAL RELATIONS WITH ALBANIA, FOR SEVERAL REASONS INCLUDING ALBANIA'S CONSIDERABLE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE AS A MILITARY OUTLET IN THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN.

BUT DESPITE MOSCOW'S INTEREST IN A POSSIBLE CHANGE IN THE PRESENT FREEZE IN RELATIONS, TIRANA SEEMS DETERMINED TO PETRIFY ITS BREAK WITH MOSCOW. THE DRAFT OF ALBANIA'S NEW CONSTITUTION, TO BE ENACTED THIS YEAR, CONTAINS A CHAPTER SPEAKING OF THE "TREACHERY OF SOVIET-LED MODERN REVISIONISTS". ACCORDING TO ALBANIAN POLITBURO MEMBER HYSNI KAPO, THE NEW CONSTITUTION WILL EXPRESS CLEARLY -- IN HIS WORDS -- THAT ALBANIA'S INTERNATIONAL POSITION AND ITS "STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND MODERN REVISIONISM WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED".

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